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MODERN LANGUAGE NOTES

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AN UNKNOWN MANUSCRIPT AND TWO EARLY PRINTED EDITIONS OF THE PROSE-PERCEVAL.

M. Ch. Potvin published, from 1865-71 at Mons for the 'Société des Bibliophiles Belges,' in six volumes, the greater portion—43,379 lines—of the poem *Le Conte del Graal*, consisting of more than 60,000 lines, by Chrétien de Troyes and his continuators, together with a prose-version of the Perceval story from a ms. (written by order of the Bishop of Cambray for Jehan Nesle, supposed to have gone to the Holy Land with Baudouin of Constantinople in February, 1200) in the Mons library, and fragments of another at Berne.

In 1876 the Rev. Robert Williams in *Y Seint Graal* published a Welsh translation, dating from the fifteenth century, contained in a Hengwert ms. and based upon a better French ms. than Potvin's two, together with a rendering into modern English (pp. 547-720).

Up to the present day the Mons ms., the Berne fragments, and the Hengwert ms. were supposed to represent everything that has come down to us of the Prose-Perceval, and M. Potvin's was considered the *editio princeps* of the romance.

At the end of his text (pp. 353-54) M. Potvin states:—

"Le roman en prose, publié dans ce volume, semble inconnu, et sauf quelques fragments, unique.

"Les Bibliothèques de l'Europe ont été explorées par des savants dont l'attention était acquise au cycle de la Table Ronde; aucun bibliographe dans ses recherches, aucun critique dans ses études ne signale une œuvre semblable. M. Paulin Paris a consacré dans son Catalogue des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris une longue étude à la Table Ronde; il n'en dit mot. M. Francisque Michel, éditeur d'un Graal en vers a visité les bibliothèques d'Angleterre; il

n'y a rien trouvé de pareil. MM. Leroux de Lincy, de la Villemarqué, Fauriel et vingt autres critiques sont dans la même situation. M. Jonckbloet a publié un long poème flamand de ce cycle en y ajoutant les sources françaises en prose; il n'a rencontré rien qui ressemblât à notre roman. Ni l'étude de Halliwell sur les *Thornton romances*, ni le livre de lady Guest, consacré aux contes gallois, ni la thèse spéciale de M. Heinrich sur Perceval ne donnent la moindre indication. Une lettre publiée dans *l'Indépendance belge* pour attirer l'attention des savants sur notre roman et les demandes particulières de renseignements que nous avons faites en France et en Allemagne ont confirmé jusqu'ici nos conclusions," etc., etc.

To the number of names enumerated here, I could add at least a dozen others of prominent scholars who have during the last thirty years devoted their attention, directly or indirectly, to the romances of the Holy Grail, but none of them has challenged M. Potvin's statement.

In July last, when examining the mss. of *lestoire del saint Graal*¹ in connection with my forthcoming edition of the vulgate-version of the Arthurian romances to be published by the Carnegie Institution of Washington, I also went through the early printed editions. There are two at the British Museum, that of 1516 by Gallot du Pre, and that of 1523 by Philippe le Noir.

The former edition has this title:—

"L'Hystoire du saint greaal Qui est le premier liure de la table ronde leuel traicte de plusieurs matieres recreatives. Ensemble la queste dudit saint greeal. Faicte par Lancelot, Galaad Boors et Perceval, qui est le dernier liure de la table ronde, lesquelz liures ne furent iamais imprimez iusques a present," etc.

The first volume contains the vulgate of *lestoire del saint graal* as represented by many mss. The

¹This title is taken from the mss., in preference to M. Hucher's *Le Grand St. Graal*.

second volume begins on fol. cxxiii recto with the following heading²:—

“Cy commence le second volume du saint greeal qui fist mention de la conqueste du saint Greeal faicte par lancelet du lac par galaad son fils perceval boort.”

An examination of this *conqueste* had a most surprising result, viz., that I identified it as the prose-version of Perceval published by M. Potvin. This romance is divided into branches most of which begin with, “ci commance une autre branche del graal el non del pere et del fiuz et del seint esperit.” In the *conqueste* there are, however, two last branches. The one of these, forming the end of the ‘Perceval,’ begins on fol. cxix thus:—

“La derreniere branche du saint greeal commence icy ou nom,” etc., and ends on fol. cxxi with the disappearance or death of Sir Perceval “mais Joseph nous tesmoigne que perleuaux sen partit en telle maniere ne oncques ne seeut homme terrien quil deuint *ne l’histoire nen parle plus*.”

The other “last branch” begins on fol. cxxi, “Cy commence la derraine branche du saint greeal,” and ends on fol. ccxxxi. This is nothing but a slightly shortened version of the vulgate *queste* as incorporated in the *Lancelot*, with an introductory chapter briefly relating the birth of Galaad. In this branch, Sir Perceval has become alive again, in order to die once more, after having achieved the quest in company with Galaad.

What I have said about the edition of 1516, applies equally to that of 1523.

The other day, when examining MSS. at the Bibliothèque Nationale, by mistake a volume (MS. fr. 1428, anc. 7526) was brought to me for which I had not asked, in lieu of another I wished to see. I was just going to return it, when following the impulse of the moment, I opened it at random and glanced at the text.

What was my surprise when I had again the Prose-Perceval published by M. Potvin before my eyes! Looking more closely at the volume, I found notes written in ink on the vellum by the hand of M. Paulin Paris—such as I had seen before in many MSS., for it was the habit of this

scholar to annotate the MSS.—and at the beginning of the text the following note:—

“Le Roman de Perlesvaus ou Perleval qui semble avoir été remanié pour devenir celui de Perceval le Gallois. Il a été imprimé à la suite du S. Graal sous le titre le second volume du St. Graal contenant la conqueste faicte etc. 1516 pet. inf. Ici manquent les 5 ou 6 premiers feuillets et ce que contiennent les 23 derniers feuillets imprimés.”

In conclusion, I may state that M. E. Hucher mentions both printed editions in the first volume of *Le Saint Graal*, Le Mans, 1875–78, p. 24:—

“223 xv^e siècle, sur papier, prototype de l’édition de Philippe Lenoir (1523)” and

“Add, 1. E 10292, 10294. Texte pareil à celui de l’édition de 1514–1516 d’après M. Maunde Thompson du British Museum.”

and in other places. On page 26, in speaking of the Didot-Perceval, he says:—“cette dernière partie diffère complètement du Perceval que l’évêque de Cambrai fit écrire pour Jehan de Nesle,” etc.

Such an authority on the Arthurian MSS. as my late friend, Mr. Henry Ward, has collated the edition of 1516 with the various MSS. for his Catalogue of the Romances—one I hope that will be imitated some day by the authorities of the Bibliothèque Nationale—and yet failed to recognize in the *conqueste* the text³ of *Perceval le Gallois*.

H. OSKAR SOMMER.

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ETYMOLOGICAL NOTES.

1. Goth. *afdarwiþs* ‘abgehetzt, erschöpft,’ implies an inf. **dōjan*, which, as Grienberger, *Got. Wortkunde* 5 f., recognized, can not be connected with ON. *deyia* ‘sterben.’ But Grienberger’s explanation of the word is equally faulty (cf. Uhlenbeck, *PBB.* 27, 114 f.). We may, however, refer **dōjan* to an IE. base *dhē-*, *dhō-*, *dhā-* in Ir. *dedaim* ‘tabesco, fatisco,’ *dith* ‘Tod, Ende,’

²This is preceded on ff. cxvi–cxxii by a separate title-page and a table of contents.

³I have collated the printed editions of 1516 and 1523 with this text, but, owing to want of time, not yet the Paris MS.